

**Connecticut General Assembly**  
**Nonpartisan Staff Dress Code Policy**  
**Effective February 3, 2016**

This nonpartisan staff dress code policy represents the standards of dress determined to be appropriate by the nonpartisan office directors within their discretion under Section 8.4 – Standards of Dress, Connecticut General Assembly Handbook as of January 24, 2007.

**General Guidelines**

All attire must be appropriate for a business environment; for example, the attire must be clean, pressed, fit properly, and not show undue wear. Religious or cultural attire central to one's personal faith is permitted. Employees may wear clothing in accordance with their gender identity or expression.

When the legislature is in regular session, or when employees have scheduled meetings with legislators or external customers, they must wear "business professional" clothing (see below). When the legislature is not in session, employees may wear "business casual" clothing (see below). For each special session, dress requirements will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

**Business Professional and Business Casual**

Requiring nonpartisan staff to adhere to a dress code that varies primarily based on whether the legislature is in or out of session means that certain dress norms are expected to be followed, except for certain circumstances such as the nature of an individual's job function. Further, these dress norms reflect a traditional business culture and thus there are a few differences based on the gender of the individual nonpartisan staff.

***Business Professional Attire***

- For women, business professional attire consists of suits (with either pants or skirts), blazers (or blazer-alternatives) and dress pants or skirts, dress shirts (e.g., blouses, collared shirts, or knit tops), dresses, sweaters, and accessories that project a professional and neat appearance. Business professional footwear for women includes loafers, flats, heels, open-toed shoes, and dress boots.
- For men, business professional attire consists of suits, blazers, dress pants, dress shirts, ties, sweaters, and accessories that project a professional and neat appearance. Shirts should be tucked in and ties and socks are required. Business professional footwear for men include loafers, dress shoes, and dress boots. Suit jackets are required when meeting with legislators or other external customers.

## ***Business Casual Attire***

- For women, business casual attire includes casual pants, (not jeans, cargo pants, or cropped pants that are higher than half way up the calf), shirts, dresses, sweaters, and skirts that are still appropriate for a business environment.
- For men, business casual attire includes casual pants (not jeans or cargo pants), tucked-in collared shirts (including polo shirts), sweaters, and turtlenecks that are still appropriate for a business environment. Socks are [still] required.

## **Inappropriate Attire**

Very casual or sport attire is prohibited except as listed below under exceptions. Examples of inappropriate attire unless listed under an exception below include: denim/jean clothing of any type or color; cargo, camouflage, or painter pants; shorts; skorts; t-shirts; tank tops; strapless or spaghetti-strap tops and dresses; athletic or outdoor wear of any variety (e.g., sports team jerseys, yoga or sweat pants, warm-ups, etc.); and leggings worn as pants.

Examples of inappropriate footwear unless listed under an exception below include: sneakers, slippers, Croc or Birkenstock-style sandals or clogs, athletic shoes, boat shoes, and flip flops. For comings and goings during the work day, employees may wear whatever shoe is practical (e.g., snow boots to deal with inclement weather, sneakers for walks on your lunch break, etc.).

## **Exceptions and Further Guidance**

Variations from this policy may be appropriate depending on the nature of the individual's job function, as determined by the individual's office director. Additionally, variations may be allowed based on extenuating circumstances, such as personal injury, workplace clean-up days, special events, or building services issues (e.g., heating and cooling failures). On Dress-Down Fridays (the third Friday of June, July, August, and September except as provided in the General Guidelines), jeans, sneakers, and other casual attire that is neat and in good repair may be worn.

With no exceptions, clothing items that contain words, terms, or pictures that are political, sexual, or promotional in nature, or that may be offensive to others, are prohibited.

Because no dress code can cover all contingencies, employees should use their own judgment, erring on the side of formal, rather than casual, where they are unsure. Employees are also encouraged to speak to their supervisor, director, or a member of the Human Resources staff when in doubt.

This policy only applies on regular weekdays and not on holidays or weekends, unless contact with legislators or external customers is anticipated, in which case at least business casual attire must be worn.